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Soto/Sonnenschein Laboratory at the Tufts University School of Medicine GNBC Students & Scientists Program, August 2017

My whole life I have been a very hands on person. I couldn't grasp concepts unless there was something for me to physically grasp. This makes it hard for me to just accept what I'm told. I ask why? How? What's the purpose? Usually these are the questions people don't have answers for, and when they do I'm just left with more questions.

Going to this lab not only taught me important lessons about science, but it has also taught me important lessons about myself. I learned numerous concepts in the short time I was there. I learned about mammary glands and the endocrine system. I learned about how industry affects policy. And most importantly, I learned about the harmful chemicals all around us that will harm us for generations to come. These chemicals are used in so many everyday products it's almost impossible to avoid them. One of the biggest problems is that although a company may cease to use BPA, the alternatives are even worse.

If this information that BPA was harmful had just been told to me I would have said okay but how come? And that's why it was important for me to come to this lab at Tufts. I needed an opportunity to be exposed to the data and see the results on my own. When reading the glands, although I didn't know which were the control group, I was still able to identify a distinct difference in glands with major growth and the glands with hardly any development. Without the knowledge taught to me at the lab, I would not have understood what I was looking at through the microscope. After learning about the different stages of mammary glands, I was able to truly analyze the data I was taking. I had the ability to identify the lymph node and see how far along the branches had grown. Suddenly a lot of my 'how come' questions began to disappear.

As we continued working and began to study the microbiome behavior analysis videos, I started to really understand concepts I had been taught. Such as, our endocrine system controls our hormones. But what happens when something disrupts our system? Endocrine disruptors interfere with our system at different dosages, and how this affects our behavior is clear through these videos. Once again we were not told which litter was the control group and I appreciate that because it gave me an opportunity to look and analyze data on my own. There were some huge differences and I wouldn't be surprised if the ones that received the low dosages of the estrogenic Bisphenol A were the mice with more rapid behavior.

Sitting here writing this, I can't help but think about how I took these lessons home with me and use them in my everyday life. One of the biggest lessons I've learned is to stay skeptical and keep asking questions, because as one of the researchers said, "Your mind is an awful thing to waste."

Thank you so much to the Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition for this opportunity not only not to waste my mind, but to expand it. I would also like to thank Carlos, Ana, and the whole lab at Tufts for being so

patient and giving with the knowledge they had. They truly made my experience the best that I could have ever hoped for. I am also creating a change in lifestyle for me and those around me. Always checking what's in a product I'm using, and becoming aware of the harm I am exposing myself to. I'm going to out into the world and try to make sure everyone around me knows the truth. I'll tell them about the hormones, and endocrine disruptors. Making sure they've heard of chemicals such as BPA and BPS, and trying to ensure the world I leave is safer than the world I came into.